

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this Application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

This Amendment is in response to the Final Office Action mailed on December 19, 2003. Claims 1-7 and 9-32 are pending in the Application, Claims 1, 27-29, and 32 stand rejected, and Claims 30 and 31 stand objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. Claims 2-7 and 9-26 have been allowed. The indication of allowable subject matter is noted with appreciation. By the present Amendment, Applicants have amended Claims 27, 28, and 32 and cancelled Claim 1 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesy of an interview extended to Applicants' representative on February 24, 2004. During the interview, the novel and advantageous features of the present invention were discussed as compared to conventional devices. Although an agreement was not reached during the interview, The Examiner, Ms. Sumati Krishnan, indicated on the interview summary (form PTO 413) that 1) removal of "or being directly threaded" in lines 8-9 of Claim 1 or 2) addition of the word "open" in line 8 of Claim 1 so it reads "the open thin metallic frame" would enable Claim 1 to read over the cited art of record, namely Yano (US Patent No. 6,594,143, hereinafter "Yano").

In view of the allowed subject matter of Claim 2, Applicants have herein cancelled Claim 1 and amended the dependency of Claims 27, 28, and 32 to depend from Claim 2. Claims 29-31 are now also dependent indirectly from Claim 2. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 27-32 are now in condition to be allowed.

Claims 1, 27-29, and 32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Yano. In view of the cancellation of Claim 1 and the present amendment changing the

Application No. 09/824,769  
Reply to Office Action of December 19, 2003

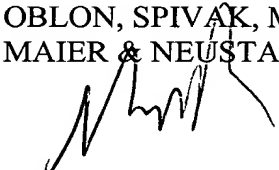
dependency of Claims 27, 28, and 32, Applicants respectfully submit that the obviousness rejection of Claims 1, 27-29, and 32 is now moot. Its withdrawal is respectfully requested.

The proposed amendments to Claims 27, 28, and 32 and the cancellation of Claim 1 submitted hereinabove should be entered by the Examiner because the amendments place this Application in condition for allowance, are supported by the as-filed specification and drawings, and do not add any new matter to the application. Further, the amendments do not raise new issues or require a further search. Finally, if the Examiner determines that the amendments do not place the application in condition for allowance, entry is respectfully requested upon filing of a Notice of Appeal.

In view of the foregoing discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the above-referenced Application is condition for immediate allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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